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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 7 June 1991, at noon

President: Mr. PIRIZ-BALLON (Uruguay)

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The meeting was called to order at 12.15 p.m.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATOR FOR 1990 AND PROGRAMME-LEVEL ACTIVITIES (DP/1991/10 and Add.1-4)

1. Mr. DRAPER (Administrator) said that the most important message to emerge from the Gulf war was the urgent need to place international cooperation at the centre of world affairs. Five years earlier, when he had assumed his duties as Administrator, the world had been a very different place. Since then, a chain of dramatic and completely unexpected events had taken place, highlighted by the end of the cold war. Perhaps most exciting was the surge of people's movements around the world. The challenge now would be to define a global vision and to rally people's support for the realization of their common future.

2. While the concept of people-centred development was in danger of becoming a cliché, he could not overemphasize its importance or its far-reaching implications. If development was to have permanent effects, men and women must be at the centre of the process. In country after country - from Poland to Haiti and from Bangladesh to Benin - the irresistible pull towards democracy was opening up virtually limitless opportunities.

3. As emphasized in the Human Development Report 1991, the time for a new development ethos had come. The 1990s could be converted into a real human development decade only if the necessary political will was mobilized. UNDP intended to continue its role in human development, as mandated by the Governing Council. For UNDP, the past five years had been a time of reflection and change. Through rigorous and close consultation with its development partners, some guiding principles had emerged.

4. First, development should be seen and judged in terms of its capacity to make people's lives better and more meaningful. While economic growth was necessary for human development, much could be done even at low income levels by reallocating existing resources and ensuring human freedom and human rights. By the same token, higher gross national product levels did not guarantee human development for all in the absence of policies directed to that end.

5. Secondly, the natural environment must be recognized as the source of sustenance for human and other life. It was necessary to build societies in which the preservation of the environment was regarded with as much urgency as the preservation of accustomed lifestyles, since in the long run, human deprivation and environmental neglect would undermine any efforts towards a better world.

6. Thirdly, the success or failure of development ultimately lay with the developing countries themselves. That was not to say that the industrialized countries were absolved of responsibility. In the end, however, development hinged on a country's political will and on the strength of its own human

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resources. National goals and priorities alone must constitute the basis for development cooperation.

7. While institutions were slow to change - and UNDP was no exception - he felt that UNDP had achieved a firm sense of direction and a sound and workable framework for technical cooperation. A number of ideas which were currently being implemented - including the strengthening of national execution and the decentralization of UNDP activities - had been reaffirmed in General Assembly resolution 44/211.

8. UNDP was also moving towards a more integrated programme approach, flowing from national priorities, as opposed to a collection of diverse and unrelated projects. Such an approach should enhance programme impact and coordination, and provide UNDP with greater flexibility in responding to the needs of the developing world.

9. The strengthening of many UNDP programmes, particularly those focusing on women, indigenous non-governmental organizations and the private sector, had arisen from a belief in development from within. It was widely acknowledged in donor and developing countries alike that all three were important development resources which could and must be tapped. UNDP was registering accomplishments in each of those areas and was increasing its impact by working at the grass-roots level as well as at the national planning and policy levels. Developing countries had a vast store of experience which they must more actively share with one another. UNDP would continue to do its utmost to promote technical cooperation among developing countries.

10. The integration of women into every aspect of the work of UNDP was a source of growing benefits to women around the world. UNDP was making education available to women in remote regions of Nepal, providing credit and extension services to women farmers in Ghana, and teaching business skills to women in Mexico and Guatemala. At the same time, it was helping the Governments of Bangladesh, Bhutan and Pakistan to bring women more fully into national development planning.

11. Non-governmental organizations were also becoming more frequent partners in UNDP programmes. Since 1988, grants amounting to more than $4 million had been awarded to non-governmental organizations and grass-roots groups in 65 countries through the Partners in Development Programme. Other projects were promoting new cooperation between Governments and non-governmental organizations.

12. UNDP was gaining momentum in the private sector. Over the past five years, UNDP resident representatives had hosted several hundred meetings around the world to bring top government policy makers together with local entrepreneurs. In Latin America, UNDP was helping ACCION International to develop loan programmes for entrepreneurs. Small- and medium-sized businesses in Indonesia were being promoted through a new venture capital fund. Through the Africa Project Development Facility, UNDP had helped 67 enterprises to

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grow, thus creating 5,000 new jobs. In many parts of the world, the demand for United Nations Short-term Advisory Resources (UNISTAR) volunteers continued to rise. Lastly, UNDP was breaking new ground in helping Poland, Romania and other European recipient countries to move from centrally planned to market-driven economies. Privatization in countries from Madagascar to Mongolia and from Bolivia to Yemen had also received assistance.

13. In the area of the environment, UNDP had a broad-based approach. It was working with policy makers and planners in the South, and with donors and research institutes in the North. As in other areas, the primary objective of UNDP was to develop the management capacities of men and women so as to ensure environmentally sound development after its work had ended.

14. Together with the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Bank, UNDP was managing a $1.5 billion global environment facility, which had so far approved projects to fight depletion of the ozone layer, global warming, the loss of bio-diversity and the pollution of international waters.

15. Furthermore, preparations for the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development were well under way. In countries all over the world, UNDP was sponsoring awareness-raising seminars and workshops on the environment, and was helping Governments and non-governmental organizations to draw up national and regional strategies in preparation for the Conference.

16. At the same time, UNDP was mindful of the tension which could exist between environmental concerns and economic progress. It was necessary to take a realistic look at both population growth and lifestyles in order to determine the levels at which development could be sustained. Ironically, it was affluence in the North and poverty in the South which caused environmental degradation. Moreover, new global realities, such as limited natural resources and the AIDS tragedy, were bringing to the forefront issues which had previously remained in the background. As the international community dealt with those issues, new ethical standards for global cooperation were being developed.

17. Until recently, for example, UNDP had seldom raised the issues of human freedom and human rights; however, their impact on development could no longer be ignored. In the Human Development Report 1991, 88 countries, developed and developing alike, had been ranked according to a new human freedom index. It had been discovered that there appeared to be a high correlation between human freedom and human development. It should be noted, however, that the human freedom index was only at an initial stage of development and should be regarded as a catalyst for constructive debate.

18. It was not appropriate for UNDP to make human freedom a precondition for assistance, and he was not suggesting such an approach for others. However, UNDP was responding creatively to opportunities at the country level as they arose. For example, UNDP had played a pivotal role in the success of Haiti's

first free elections by channelling $6 million in technical assistance to the independent Electoral Council.

19. UNDP was finding itself in other new and unexpected roles. First, in Somalia, it was providing humanitarian aid in areas of the country controlled by three different political factions. Secondly, in Iraq, it was assisting in relief efforts being coordinated by Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan. Thirdly, in the Gulf region, 60 United Nations Volunteers were working with United Nations agencies in delivering humanitarian assistance. Lastly, in Thailand, the UNDP Resident Representative had for years spent up to 80 per cent of his time directing the daily delivery of food, water, textbooks and medical supplies to 300,000 displaced persons along the Thai-Cambodian border.

20. The growing number of emergencies world wide, including the painful plight of displaced persons and refugees, demanded a speedy and professional response from the United Nations system as a whole. The coordinating functions of the UNDP resident representatives, in their roles as resident coordinators and representatives of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator, placed UNDP in a key position to respond to that challenge in the field.

21. It was in Africa that the greatest challenges for UNDP still lay. While the incomes of many of the world's poor had risen during the 1980s, they had fallen by nearly 20 per cent in Africa. Social services had stagnated or declined. The population was growing by 3 per cent per year, while food production was growing by no more than 1 to 2 per cent. Only one in five children born in Africa currently received adequate nutrition for a healthy and productive life.

22. Hence, it was in Africa that the greatest and most imaginative efforts must be made. Building capacities, first to define strategic national goals and then to manage the development process, was fundamental. Particularly in Africa, where most countries were pursuing difficult structural reforms, human development must be recognized as central to a viable strategy.

23. The integrity of the UNDP programme in Africa and other regions, and the ability of UNDP to respond to new demands, must be commensurate with its level of financial resources. Unless instructed otherwise, UNDP would continue to plan on the basis of the increase in core resources of 8 per cent per year during the fifth cycle which the Governing Council had decided on at its previous session. However, he appealed to the members of the Governing Council to consider carefully the seriousness of the responsibilities with which UNDP was charged and to ask themselves whether their countries might do more. Lastly, he thanked all donors, developed and developing countries alike, for their generous support of UNDP.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.